

Draft - 23 July 1950

Dear Mr. Webb:

I am in receipt of your letter of 7 July 1950, transmitting for my comments a Staff Study, dated 1 May 1950, entitled "Production of National Intelligence". Your letter further notes that this Staff Study represents the agreed views of the Departments of State and Defense on the problem of producing national intelligence.

(After careful study by myself and the members of my staff, we have reached the conclusion that for reasons set forth below) The proposals set forth in the Staff Study are unacceptable to this Agency, ^{as they} Furthermore, they ^{represent} so radical a departure from the concept of the Central Intelligence Agency as envisaged by the Congress that I would not have the legal authority to adopt these proposals even if I considered them sound.

(Your Staff Study favors an approach which would, in effect, place the CIA in a position of subservience to the ^{depts. of state and defense} (major) intelligence organizations. (of other Government Departments) (If this latter view were to prevail, my only alternative would be to recommend that the President submit the proposal to the Congress for their consideration, as it is diametrically opposed both to the letter and the spirit of the existing statute and to the Congressional intent in establishing this Agency.)

(As an indication of this Congressional intent,) I (wish to) quote from the statement of the Chairman of the Special Subcommittee of the House Expenditures Committee Investigating Intelligence Activities of the Government (at the time of the Bogota crisis) dated 16 April 1948: (At that time, the Chairman stated:)

"Certainly it was not the intention of Congress, in the Act creating the CIA, to give the State Department a power of censorship over intelligence reports...."

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It may be necessary for Congress to enact additional legislation to give the CIA the independent status it was generally presumed to enjoy....Our Central Intelligence Agency must be protected against censorship or intimidation by any arm of the Executive Branch."

The above quotation represents the intent of the Congress, as has been repeatedly made clear to me in virtually every committee session I have attended since assuming the Directorship. (If further evidence of this intent is needed, I call your attention to the fact that in time of crisis the President and appropriate congressional committees have always looked to the Director of Central Intelligence for an accounting and for briefing on the intelligence situation. (It) has always made it amply clear in these situations that (they) hold the Director and this Agency completely responsible in the field of foreign intelligence, and (they) presume that this Agency has the requisite powers and authorities to make that responsibility effective in the interests of our national security.

The (ultimate) effect of your Staff Study is to bring about collective responsibility (in the field) of national intelligence (production). This involves a shift of the statutory responsibility for the production of national intelligence from the Central Intelligence Agency to a collective responsibility of the Intelligence Advisory Committee. This is (brought out) in your study, (where it is stated that:)

"Until the emergence of a national estimate or study from the IAC, collective responsibility is inescapable under the Act of 1947.... The full statutory responsibility of the D/CI for the production of national intelligence becomes operative only when...final drafts of national estimates or studies are recommended by the IAC to the D/CI".

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The National Security Act (did) not contemplate any such doctrine of collective responsibility (and the corresponding reduction of the Director's control and responsibility). (In fact, quite the opposite is the case.) Furthermore, ^{but} in NSC 50, the National Security Council (has) specifically disavowed ~~the~~ doctrine of collective responsibility for national intelligence production. ^{language:} [This point needs no further elaboration here other than to state that I concur in the following statement contained in NSC 50]

"...we do not believe that the Director and the IAC should be bound by the concept of collective responsibility because this would inevitably reduce coordinated national intelligence to the lowest common denominator among the agencies concerned".

(The assertions in your Staff Study regarding the quality of CIA national intelligence production have not been supported nor has the level been indicated at which such implied dissatisfaction exists. We do not consider these assertions to be valid, nor any basis for the extensive procedural and organizational changes recommended.)

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(For some time now) (we have given) careful thought and much study to the existing (NSCID #1) in (its) relation to the statutory (authorities) of this Agency. (We have felt that) the present directives and their implementation by departmental intelligence agencies have not been satisfactory. (in terms of national intelligence production.) For this reason, we have prepared for submission to the National Security Council a basic NSCID which is attached herewith for your information. (It is felt that) this draft (sets) forth more clearly than present directives the authorities of this Agency (as well as) the responsibilities of the departmental agencies in support of

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national intelligence. (In addition, by defining national intelligence, both in terms of content and use, it will provide an adequate guide to the operating officials concerned.)

(There is no purpose in allocating responsibilities to CIA if the) (requisite authority for the performance of such responsibilities is) (curtailed or vested in a collective responsibility of the departmental) (agencies. Insofar as the Staff Study limits the control of the Director) (in the field of national intelligence production it cannot be accepted) (and is in derogation of the law.)

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It is noted in your letter that the Departments of State and Defense propose to submit the Staff Study to the National Security Council at an early date for consideration. Your attention is invited to Section 102 (a)(2) of the National Security Act of 1947 which provides that it shall be the duty of the Central Intelligence Agency

"to make recommendations to the National Security Council for the coordination of such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security".

Out } As the Staff Study which you have forwarded to me is concerned entirely with the subject of our national intelligence, it would be preferable if it were considered under the accepted procedures for a National Security Council Intelligence Directive rather than a National Security Council directive. This would be in accordance with the Council's established practice in connection with Directives of this nature.

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I propose to submit the attached NSCID draft for Security Council action, and have no objection to including with such submission, together with my comments and recommendations, your 1 May Staff Study. Prior to such submission I will appreciate receiving the comments of the Departments of State and Defense. In view of the indicated manner of coordination of your Staff Study with the Department of Defense it is assumed that you will provide similar coordination for this paper.

Sincerely,

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